

# Reorganizing the New York Central Labor Union

By Emil Lyon

The Gompers machine which controls the A. F. of L. is determined to keep the workers under the heels of the bosses. It is ready for almost any kind of tactics to prevent the development of more radical methods of struggle by the workers.

This was illustrated in the course pursued by this machine in reorganizing the New York City central labor organization.

Heretofore there have been two central labor bodies in the Greater New York, the Central Federated Union of New York and the Central Labor Union of Brooklyn. The Central Federated Union of New York won the enmity of the Gompers machine by repudiating Gompers' policy of "rewarding the friends and punishing the enemies" of organized labor, which in practice meant putting the power in the hands of the enemies of organized labor. The opposition of the Gompers machine developed as the result of the endorsement of the labor party by the Central Federated Union.

## Combine Two Central Bodies

By some sharp maneuvering the Gompers machine was able to get the two central bodies to adopt resolutions to ask the Executive Committee of the A. F. of L. to reorganize the central organizations so as to have one central body for all of Greater New York.

On Wednesday, September 11, a convention was held in the Central Opera House for this purpose, under the auspices of the Gompers' machine. Seven hundred and eighty delegates, whose credentials were carefully scrutinized by Gompers lieutenants were admitted to the convention. It quickly developed that everything had been fixed up in advance by the Gompers' crowd and that no one who opposed the program of the reactionaries had the slightest chance.

## Machine Had Sluggers on Land

Gompers presided, with Mathew Wolf, of the A. F. of L. national machine, in reserve. Frank Morrison, secretary of A. F. of L. was also ready at hand to help keep things strait. More important, was a body of delegates from the teamsters, longshoreman and building trades unions. These unions have been the backbone of the Gompers' machine. The delegation in question was made up

of the huskiest members of these organizations that could be found. They were not there to discuss the problems of organized labor in Greater New York, but to beat up anyone who dared raise his voice against the Gompers' program.

After several hours of examination of the credentials of the delegates, Gompers read a list of names of persons to be appointed a committee to draft a constitution for the new central body, named the Central Trades and Labor Council of Greater New York and Vicinity. This consisted of the most reactionary leaders in the labor movement of New York City, among them being several well known Tammany politicians.

The reading of this list brought a howl of protest from the delegates, which was the signal for the Gompers plug uglies to swing into action to beat up those who opposed his appointees. A riot resulted which was not quieted until the police arrived and the meeting was adjourned.

## A. F. of L. Sabotages The Workers

This incident is only another indication of the hopelessly of the A. F. of L. as a weapon of the workers in the bitter struggle developing on the industrial field. The A. F. of L. officialdom, from Gompers down to the local labor leaders, is bound more closely to the bosses than to the workers in the shops. They more often sabotage the strikes of the workers than help them win.

The cure for this situation is for the workers to get together in the shops, irrespective of trade union lines and develop their own organizations for fighting the bosses. By organizing shop committees in every factory, mine, mill or store, they can create the machinery for fighting the bosses effectively and for beating the reactionary trade union leaders.

The shop committee, the industrial council and community council to unite all the workers for the struggle against the bosses and against the trade union betrayers of the workers—that should be the slogan of the workers in the shop.

The New York City workers, who are being sold out to the reactionaries, should answer Gompers and his machine by organizing their own organs of struggle.